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ABSTRACT

A creative visualization approach to spelling and word recognition has been tried successfully with both adults and children. Unlike the traditional phonic approach to spelling, which is a left brain, analytical approach, the creative visualization approach uses the right brain. In addition, the approach eliminates the unpleasant associations with spelling that have been conditioned within the individual. The approach has two phases: pre-assessment and instruction. In the pre-assessment phase, students' eye movement patterns as they are related to visually remembered material are calibrated. In the instructional phase ten words are taught over the course of five days. Day one activities include observing a word which is held in the direction of the student's eye movement accessing pattern, practicing blinking responses, picturing new words on the forehead or chest of a favorite hero, and spelling new words backwards, then forwards. On day two words are reviewed, and color is used in the visualization. On day three students correct misspelled words, and practice the visualization methods with difficult words (determined by spelling tests). On day four students practice visualization with "chunks" of the words they have difficulty with. Finally, on day five, students take a spelling test, and check and correct one another's work. Additionally, students should sit up straight while spelling and be motivated to maintain a positive belief system. (ARH)

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A Creative Visualization Approach to Teaching, Spelling and Sight Words

by

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INTRODUCTION

Students who have failed to learn to recognize and spell words have a belief that they cannot learn to read and spell. These individuals' histories are replete with failure. They have been admonished to study harder, try harder, etc. They have been deluged with the traditional method of sounding out the word, even though they have consistently failed at that method. It would seem that common sense would dictate trying a new approach. A wise Chinese philosopher by the name of Po-te once said, "If what you are doing keeps failing, then try something different."

To further complicate the matter, approximately 28% of the words in beginning reading and spelling texts cannot be spelled phonically. One cannot even spell the word phonics, phonetically. Other examples are "kome" for come, "meny" for many, etc., etc., etc.

The traditional phonic approach to spelling and recognizing basic beginning words is a left brain, analytical approach. The author's purpose is to use a right brain, creative visualization, approach. To this end, a creative visualization approach was developed and tried with both adults and children. Our initial findings are very promising for teaching adults and children who have not learned with traditional approaches.

This approach eliminates the unpleasant associations that have been conditioned within the individual. Its newness offers hope to the student. Furthermore, its simplicity enables the student to learn it rapidly, thereby, installing confidence and motivating the student to learn and spell more words. This systematic method is inexpensive and can be incorporated into any reading and spelling program. We offer it to you with the hope that

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you will share it with others. For more information on creative strategies, write:

Strategic Psychology
13370 Old St. Augustine Road
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Pre-Assessment Phase

1. Identify and select a group of 5 to 10 words to teach the students.
2. Calibrate the students' eye movement patterns as they are related to visually remembered material. Do this by showing each student five pictures. Let the student look at each picture for five seconds. Then, take the picture away and ask the student to describe what he/she just saw. Watch where the student's first eye movement goes. Put a check mark in the box that indicates the direction of the eye movement.

Study the example below:

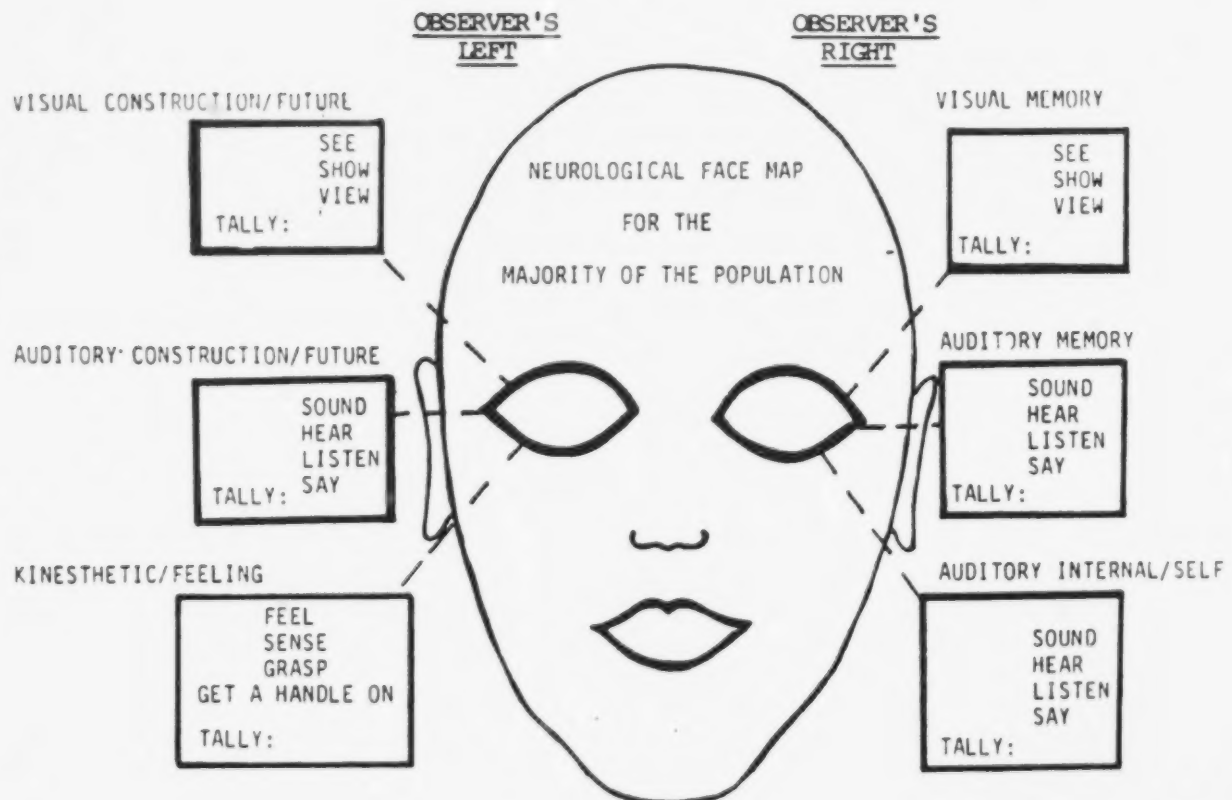


Illustration 1

For example, Karen was given 5 pictures to look at. After the teacher presented a picture for 5 seconds and took it away, she asked Karen to describe what she saw. Karen's first eye movement was up and to her left. (See Illustration 1). Each time Karen was shown a picture and asked to recall what was in it, her eyes would move up and to her left. Karen made this pattern 5 times. See Illustration 2. It appears that Karen's eye movement pattern for accessing visually remembered material is up and to her left.

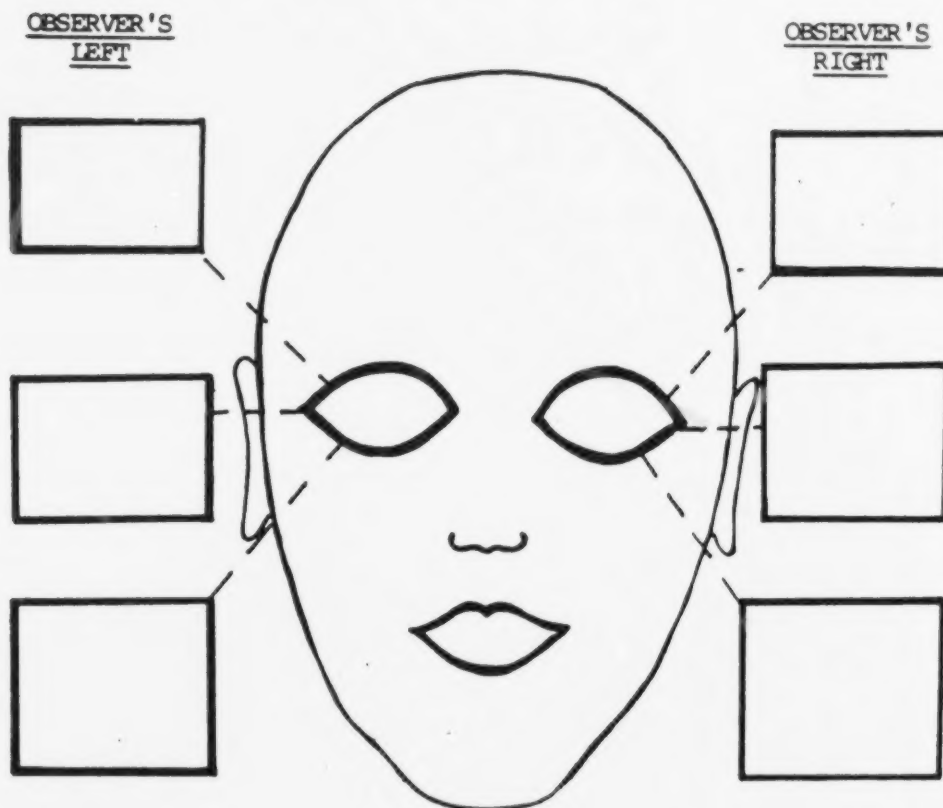


Illustration 2

Instructional Phase

When the student's eye pattern movement for accessing visually remembered material has been identified, explain to the student that it is easier to remember reading and spelling words when his/her eyes look in that specific direction. After determining the eye accessing pattern, tell the student the specific direction that their eyes should go when studying or remembering information. Tell the student that this new method of learning words will enable him/her to remember the word and its correct spelling very easily. Tell him/her that the more he/she uses it, the easier spelling words correctly will be.

Day 1

Write ten new spelling words in the upper left hand corner of the chalkboard. Always use the same color chalk. Show a picture or an object depicting the word, holding it in the direction of the student's eye movement accessing pattern for visually presented material. Have the student move their head back and blink their eyes at the same time. For most students this will be up and to the left. Make sure the student knows the meaning of the words by having them make sentences using the words. Have the students practice spelling the first five words, by doing the following:

Tell the students to look at the word and picture it on the forehead or chest of their favorite hero. A favorite object, such as a race car, tank, airplane, etc., may be used. Tell them to take a picture of it with their "eye-mind camera" and hold it there. Have them do the blinking response. Remove the word from view, and move around the room picking students randomly to spell words backwards then forwards. Spelling the word backwards forces the students to make a visual picture of the word. Blinking imprints the word on the brain. Have the student break the word into 2, 3, or 4 letter "chunks", example: bel-dap-ini.

Give a spelling test to determine what words the students are consistently misspelling. Assign the first five spelling words for homework. Tell the students to study the words at home and in school using the same method they were taught.

Day 2

Review the previous five spelling words using the "forward/backward,blink" method. Have the students look up and to the left and visualize each spelling word. Ask the student to close their eyes and picture the word in their "eye-mind camera" in the same color. Make the word as clearly as possible. Instruct the student to write each spelling word on a different color of paper. Teach the next five spelling words according to the procedure given for Day One. Assign the additional five spelling words for home work.

Day 3

Write several misspellings of the word and the correct spelling of the word in different places on the chalkboard and on a ditto. Have the student mark which words are misspelled. Have them correct the misspelled words. Give the students a pre-test to see which words they are misspelling consistently. If a student has difficulty identifying the standard spelling (1) repeat the activity in Day 1. Tell the student to look at the word and picture it on a favorite object, person, or color. Tell them to take a picture of it with their "eye-mind camera" and hold it there. Move around the room and have the students spell the word backwards then forwards. Spelling the word backwards forces the student to make a visual picture of the word. Assign all ten words for home work. Tell the students to study the words at home using the same method they were taught.

Day 4

Give a spelling test to determine words the students are having difficulty with. Write the words in the upper left hand side of the chalkboard in very large letters. Divide the word into 3 letter "chunks". Have the students look at the words and again picture it on their favorite hero, object, or color, and make a "snapshot" of it with their "eye-mind camera". Have them make the letters brighter on their hero or object and move the "snapshot" closer or further until the letters are very clear. Have them spell the word backwards and forwards. Some students' learning will be enhanced by having them trace the word in the air and say it as they spell it backward and forward - check to find which students are helped by this addition.

Give the students a pre-test by saying each of the 10 spelling words. The teacher pronounces the word, uses it in a sentence, and then repeats the word. Have students exchange papers and correct each others' misspelled words. Assign all ten words for homework.

Day 5

Give the spelling test using the ten words taught that week. Have the students check each other's paper. Return the papers and have the students write the correct spelling of the word by each misspelled word. Tell the students to keep a list of misspelled words in the back of a folder or tablet and practice spelling the words. The students should practice these misspelled words each day until they spell them correctly.

Factors to consider:

Make sure the students sit straight when they are spelling. Have them breathe from the upper chest to enhance the visual process.

If a student misses words when he is in a particular posture or place, move him to another posture or place. He may be conditioned to fail in that posture or place.

When the student shows signs of being fatigued, stop and move on to another activity.

Do not permit the student to make such negative statements as "I can't". If the student makes such a statement, make him say "I can", three times. This will change his/her negative belief system to a positive belief system, thereby enhancing learning. Good luck!